

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated June 1, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and removal of the rejection of Claims 1-9 on the basis of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting based on claims 1-10 of U.S. Patent No. 6,955,613 in view of Jordan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,835,146). In the Office Action, it is alleged that the '613 patent and the present inventor's claims have identical features except the differences in hardness between the layers, and that Jordan teaches layers where hardness is greater in one layer with respect to another. It is then alleged that one of ordinary skill in the art would vary the hardness in the layers for the desired flight properties. Reconsideration and removal of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Applicants would point out that there are significant and unobvious differences between the present claimed multi-piece golf ball and that claimed in U.S. Patent No. 6,955,613 over the above difference of hardness of layers.

In the multi-piece golf ball of Claim 1, the only independent claim, it is recited: "the ribs extend in such a manner that the widths thereof become wider from the cover to the core side, the concave portions are formed into a cone-like shape by the side surface of the ribs". This limitation is not shown or suggested in any claims of the '613 patent. By combining this limitation with the specific hardness of layers, the present invention shows the specific advantageous effects.

The present specification describes the following effect on page 3, line 17 to page 4, line 19, where it is stated:

“In this structure, the first intermediate layer formed on the surface of the core comprises a plurality of ribs, and the second intermediate layer is placed in the concave portions surrounded by the ribs. Each of the ribs extends such that its width is greater as approaching to the core, and this forms each concave portion into a funnel-like form. Therefore, in the region between the core and the cover, the area occupied by the first intermediate layer increases when moving from the cover to the core in concentric spherical surfaces. In other words, the proportion of the area of the second intermediate layer in the vicinity of the cover is large, while the proportion of the area of the first intermediate layer increases towards the core, so that the intermediate layers between the core and the cover have functionally graded properties in which two properties gradually change.

In the present invention, the hardness of the first intermediate layer is greater than that of the second intermediate layer, and therefore the hardness of the ball gradually increases from the cover to the core. Therefore, the initial stage of impact is greatly influenced by those properties that contribute to soft feel and, as impact progresses, ball bounce resilience increases. In the multi-piece golf ball of the present invention, because two contrasting properties smoothly change during impact, both excellent soft feel and high ball bounce resilience can be obtained, improving the balance of the properties of the ball.”

As described above, none of the claims of the '613 patent specify the shape of the ribs, and the specification of the '613 patent does not describe the above advantageous effect. Also, Jordan (U.S. Patent No. 6,835,146) does not disclose the above limitation and the effect. Thus, Applicants believe that the present invention is not obvious in view of claims 1-10 of the '613 patent combined with Jordan.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants' claims 1-9 are believed to be patentable and in condition for allowance.

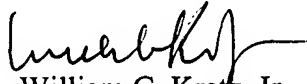
Early action towards that end is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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